

Message Text

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15

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 MC-02 PM-07 L-03 CAB-09 CIAE-00

COME-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 DRC-01 ACDA-19 /112 W

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R 191610Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2415

SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

USDEL MC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14126

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BEXP, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN INTENTIONS REGARDING F-104G REPLACEMENT

REF: A) BRUSSELS 7280; B) ROME 13998 (NOTAL)

1. ITALIANS HAVE BEEN REPLACING THEIR F-104G'S WITH UPDATED F104S
VERSION AND FIAT G91Y'S. THIS PROCESS IS NOW SCHEDULED TO BE COM-
PLETED IN 1975 AND IS CONSIDERED BY ITALIAN AIR FORCE TO SATISFY
THEIR IMMEDIATE MODERNIZATION NEEDS.

2. FOR THE LONGER TERM, THE AIR FORCE HAS OPTED FOR THE MRCA,
CITING ITS CLOSE AIR SUPPORT/INTERDICTION CAPABILITIES. THE PRO-
JECTED FORCE STRUCTURE SHOWS NO OTHER ADDITIONAL WEAPONS SYSTEM
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ACQUISITION. THE ITALIANS MAINTAIN THAT, GIVEN THEIR BUDGETARY

DIFFICULTIES AND ASSUMING AN AFFIRMATIVE EUROPEAN DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH MRCA PRODUCTION, THIS AIRCRAFT TOGETHER WITH THE F104S AND G91Y WOULD PRECLUDE ACQUISITION OF ANOTHER FIGHTER AIRCRAFT.

3. REF B REPORTED CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN LOCKHEED AND ITALIAN AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURER AERITALIA, WHICH HAS BEEN CO-PRODUCING 104'S, FOR CO-PRODUCTION OF THE LOCKHEED LANCER. THIS REPRESENT APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL CULMINATION OF STRENUOUS LOCKHEED EFFORTS, WITH STRONG EMBASSY BACKING, OVER THE PAST YEAR. (MIRAGE F-1 APPEARED ORIGINALLY TO BE IN STRONG COMPETITION BUT DROPPED OUT OF CONSIDERATION SOME TIME AGO.) THE NEW LANCER CO-PRODUCTION AGREEMENT IS PRESENTLY PREDICATED ON THIRD-COUNTRY SALES. HOWEVER, IF DECISION ON MRCA GO-AHEAD NOW SET FOR NEXT YEAR IS NEGATIVE OR IF FURTHER DELAYS ARE FORESEEN, COI PRESSURES ON THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE TO ACQUIRE THE LANCER FOR ITS INVENTORY WILL MOUNT. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

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30 JUN 2005

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